Deadlines

1. How is the information required for the July 15 deadline going to be used for future budget development and distribution?

The July 15th run will be used to show a proof of concept for the project. July will be the first time that a larger number of Fire Planning Units (FPUs) will be running the latest version of the software. The results will help us verify the improved software prior to the fall/winter deadline when all FPUs will have to run the model. This will also provide real data to test the budget development and delivery module.

2. What will happen if an FPU fails to meet the February 15th deadline?

The FPA Implementation Coordination Group (ICG) needs to be kept appraised of issues affecting successful FPU implementation. The ICG will do all it can to help make FPUs successful. If an individual partner agency in an FPU is unable or unwilling to participate, the FPU needs to do whatever is necessary to successfully complete the analysis. Failure of individual FPUs to complete the analysis on time will jeopardize the success of the FPA project, and could have impacts to future preparedness budgets. Preparedness budgets could be determined by arbitrary decisions related to departmental or governmental budget priorities without the benefit of a logical, objective fire management program needs analysis. Each bureau has issued formal direction that field units are to meet the February 15th due date. The failure to meet the due date is a bureau administrative compliance issue.

3. What if the analysis is finished by February 15th, but is not certified? Not approved by all partners? Does an analysis need to be certified and approved before the "submit" button can be pushed?

The analysis must be certified and approved before being submitted. If the submit button is not pushed, a budget will not be submitted for the FPU. The FPU partners need to coordinate their efforts to ensure that certification and approval is completed by the February 15, 2006, due date.

4. For FPUs running v1.3.1 in July and November, would they be required to rerun the February submission?

The July 15th run will be used to show a proof of concept of the project and it is anticipated that those units will have to rerun the model for the fiscal 2008 submission. For those that run the analysis during November it is expected that this run will meet the final submission requirements.

Budget

5. What year should be used as the base budget year?

Use fiscal year 2004 as the base budget year. FPA-PM is based on Preparedness funds only. Severity or suppression resources are funded by other non-preparedness accounts

6. **How is the Initial Response preparedness information going to be used for the 2008 budget allocation?**

The FPA-Preparedness Module (PM) will form the basis for the national preparedness curve showing what effectiveness can be obtained relative to a given budget. Until FPA Phase 2 is completed other Preparedness costs will be added following the FPU's Transition Plan. These costs will be added through a new module that is being developed called the Budget Development and Delivery module (BDD). Non-Preparedness costs will not be addressed through the FPA version that will be used to allocate the 2008 budget.

7. **Where will the preparedness budget items not developed in FPA-PM be submitted? Will there be an entry screen in FPA or will this occur at the Regional/State level?**

The BDD module will be the place to add other preparedness funded resources that are not included in the FPA-PM analysis. The FPUs, Regional/State, and national levels will need to complete the BDD.

8. **Will the FPU be required to convert their suppression resource mix to the resources reported/budgeted by FPA Phase 1?**

In 2007 the bureaus will begin to implement the results of FPA-PM, but changes in the existing suppression resource mix will be phased-in over several years, subject to the schedule specified in each FPU's Transition Plan. The Phase 1 resource mix is only a part of the fire management program. The National Transition Strategy details a movement toward the new resource organization mix, but does not require full implementation of changes until Phase 2 is completed.

9. **How much flexibility will local managers have to spend their budget to meet tactical needs?**

FPA is a planning and budgeting tool to assist managers in developing a wildland fire management organization. There is an expectation that the money will be spent on an organization with the efficiency of operation that is shown in the analysis. There may be circumstances (see transition plan implementation) that may not allow you to run the exact mix of resources, but the capability on the ground needs to be maintained. Resource capabilities in an FPU which differ from the analysis will be approved by all FPU members and documentation made of the change.

Although Phase 1 will identify the type, number, and location of initial response and program management resources for each FPU, the tactical deployment of those resources on fires in any particular fire season will be entirely up to local fire managers. While the deployment of resources in the FPA optimization model is for strategic planning purposes, it can also serve as a guide for tactical implementation.

10. **Are formal replies necessary when submitting a bureau budget?**

Some bureaus have issued formal direction which requires a formal reply. Those organizations receiving this direction are expected to reply through their normal channels.

11. Are the regional/state/national offices going to strip funding from the FPUs to support their programs?

The regional/state/national offices will add in their funding needs based on standardized procedures. In order to maintain the cost effective analysis each office will need to follow the FPA budget for each office.

12. Will Regional/State and National level FPA analyses require them to enter data for multiple cost limits (similar to the field)?

Yes.

13. Since FPA is going to generate approximately 10 cost limits, is each FPU required to identify non-FPA preparedness funding needs for each of the cost limits analyzed?

Yes. The FPU will be required to complete the post-optimization budget formulation requirements for each of the cost limits analyzed. Many positions will be funded at all cost limit levels, and the capability exists to copy inputs from one increment to another to reduce reentry keystrokes.

Support

14. How is FPA being accepted by agency leaders (non-fire), the departments, Congress and OMB?

The Departments, Congress, and OMB have requested, funded, and are expecting an interagency planning and budget tool within the time schedule. The agencies are following direction of the Administration and Congress to develop this tool.

15. Will this process improve preparedness funding/staffing levels?

It is our intent to identify economic efficiencies by looking at an interagency effort and therefore improve our operations. The Administration and Congress will use the results in their decision process to determine the funding for the wildland fire management organization.

16. If one partner will not approve the analysis, does this torpedo the entire analysis including the other partners' budget request?

All FPU federal partners are required to approve the analysis. Inability to resolve issues at the FPU level will require intervention by the State/Regional line officers.

Planning

17. Is any effort being made by the agencies to acquire (additional) fire planning expertise to support FPA?

Yes. The ICG has and continues to assess needs at the regional/state level for Fire Planners – especially in DOI. The USDA Forest Service has fire planners at the forest/regional and national

level, but there are not any dedicated positions for the Interior agencies. As we develop the modules for FPA Phase 2, the need for such positions at the FPU level will be identified with associated funding.

18. Since the Transition Strategy is recommending a conservative approach in implementing FPA outputs, is it acceptable to develop a FPU Transition Plan that states there will not be any fire resource changes (subject to budget availability) until 2010 when Phase 2 is fully implemented?

No. The transition plan should allow for changes to the organization throughout the development of the FPA project.

Running the Analysis

19. Will all FPUs need to run the analysis every year?

Running the analysis every year is still under discussion. Issues must be considered regarding organizational stability and the consequences that a yearly update may generate a heavier workload at the FPU level, such as maintaining the data currency.

20. Do we push the SUBMIT button when the analysis is completed?

After the analysis has been certified and approved it is submitted by the team administrator.

General

21. Will FPA replace NFPORS and other systems that duplicate workload?

No. FPA is a strategic planning and budgeting tool, whereas NFPORS is a project specific software application for tracking project level resource activities.

22. How should an FPU model large airtankers? These are national resources with unknown quantity and availability.

Airtankers should be analyzed in the current version of FPA. Even though these resources are not consistently available to an FPU, the model can provide a proof of concept for air resources. Further guidance for these resources will be provided to the field. A review of the outputs from the July 2005 run will be evaluated to determine future modeling of large airtankers. Multiple uses across FPUs of airtankers will be evaluated in FPA Phase 2 to address their use.